increasing U. S. interference in India's developmental programmes like space, atomic power and the like; and

(b) if so, by what time?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DINESH SINGH): (a) and (b) India and the US maintain a continuing dialogue on all major issues of concern to each country. Since these issues are addressed bilaterally, Government do not propose to raise such issues in multilateral fora like the UN.

Complaints regarding Bogus Passports

2788. SHRIMATI KAILASHPATI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any complaints regarding issue of bogus passports from the Lucknow Passport Office; and

(b) if so, the action taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED): (a) and (b) Cases of passports which have been obtained fraudulently from various passport offices in India including Passport Office, Lucknow, have come to Govt.'s notice. Wherever investigation of such cases substantiates that the passports were fraudulently obtained, necessary action is taken under the Passport Act, 1967.

लखनऊ पासपोर्ट कार्यालय में दलालों के माध्यम से पासपोर्ट जारी किया जाना

2789. **श्रीमती कैलाशपति**: क्या विदेश मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या सरकार का ध्यान 1 जुलाई, 1993 को लखनऊ से प्रकाशित समाचार पत्र "स्वतंत्र भारत" में प्रकाशित समाचार की ओर दिलाया गया है कि पासपोर्ट कार्यालय में पासपोर्ट केवल दलालों के माध्यम से ही जारी किए जा रहे हैं;

(ख) यदि हां, तो तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है; और

(ग) उक्त कार्यालय में भ्रष्टाचार को रोकने के लिए सरकार ने क्या कदम उठाए हैं या उठाने का विचार रखती है?

विदेश मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री आर. एल. भाटिया): (क) से (ग) सरकार ने इस खबर को देखा है। सरकार को यह जानकारी है कि पासपोर्ट कार्यालय से सम्बन्ध न रखने वाले कुछ व्यक्ति आवेदकों का शोषण करने की कोशिश करते हैं। जब भी पासपोर्ट कार्यालय के किसी कर्मचारी के संबंध में कदाचार अथवा भ्रष्ट आचरण का कोई विशिष्ट आरोप साबित हो जाता है तो कानून के अनुसार कार्यवाही की जाती है।

Agreement between India and Ukraine

2790. SHRI IQBAL SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Ukraine has decided to cooperate with India in the field of Defence, Space, Shipping and sophisticated technology;

(b) if so, whether during President's visit a number of proposals were considered;

(c) if so, whether any delegation from India visited Ukraine; and

(d) if so, what are the proposals on which Agreement has been reached?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) The Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between India and Ukraine signed on 27-3-1992 provides for cooperation in several fields including the political, trade, cultural, industrial, science & technology and environmental spheres. In pursuance of that Treaty, bilateral agreements with Ukraine are being negotiated in a variety of fields.

(b) During the President's visit to Ukraine ongoing and potential areas of cooperation were discussed.

(c) and (d) Future discussions are envisaged in both Kiev and New Delhi on ongoing and new areas of cooperation.

Increase in Fee for Duplicate Passport

2791. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI:
SHRI IQBAL SINGH:
Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to hike the fee for issue of duplicate Passports in lost/damaged documents;

(b) if so, whether the main reason is that there has been an increase in the loss of atleast 10,000 passports every year reported by Indian nationals;

(c) whether a racket in the use of such Passports after substitution of Photographs has been discovered in the Gulf region, Western Europe and North America;

(d) if so, to what extent Government propose to hike the fee of duplicate passports; and

(c) to what extent it will check racketing?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED): (a) to (c) The fees for all passport services including the fee for issue of duplicate passports in lieu of lost/damaged passports have been increased w.e.f. July 10, 1993. The fees have been increased to bring them in line with the cost of production and preparation of passports. The fee for duplicate passports has been increased from Rs. 50 to Rs. 2500 in India and to Rs. 6250 abroad.

It has come to Government's notice that increasing number of cases of lost passports are being reported, especially at Indian Missions abroad. Government have also received information about various rackets in different countries where passports are being tampered with and photographs substituted both in new and duplicate passports. Such cases, as and when they come to Government's notice, are investigated and where it is substantiated that there has been a malafide act, action is taken under the Passports Act, 1967.

Problems faced by Hajees

2792. SHRI DEBABRATA BISWAS: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that Hajees were alleged to have faced problems during the recent Haj; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) and (b) Some complaints pertaining to the accommodation in Makkah were received from pilgrims among a group of 2,300 out of the total 25,000, who were allotted accommodation at a distance of about 1500 meters from the Haram Sharif; the rest being accommodated within the 1000 meters. Despite the availability of special transport arrangements for these 2,300 pilgrims some of them had difficulty on occasions in reaching the Grand Mosque for prayers which led to complaints. The more remote location of their lodgings occurred because accommodation arrangements made through a private contractor were not accepted by the Saudi authorities and fresh efforts had to be made to find the requisite accommodation at a late stage, by which time buildings closer to Haram Sharif had already been rented out.

There were also complaints from pilgrims about the flight arrangements for the Haj. Uncertainties in Air India's operations necessitated a charter with Aeroflot, which was unable to make adequate arrangements for the baggage of all the returning pilgrims. Subsequently, special arrangements were made to bring their baggage to India and to distribute it to them.

Memorials on Mahatma Gandhi's life in South Africa

2793. SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have approached the South African Government for converting the three landmark sites in the Mahatma Gandhi's life, i.e. Phoenix farm, Tolstoy farm and Peter Maritzburb, into memorials;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the South African Government's response thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED): (a) to (c) In view of the fact that Government of India does not have diplomatic relations with the Government of South Africa, the question of approaching the South African Government does not arise.

Opening of Foreign Consular Offices in Bangalore

2794. SHRI B. K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware of the fact that Bangalore, of late, has become, the hub of sharing of international technical expertise both in engineering and electronics, with many multinationals setting up their offices there; and

(b) if so, whether Government would consider permitting overseas missions from developed countries like U. K., U. S. A., Germany, Sweden and Netherlands to open their trade consular offices in Bangalore for the benefit of local entrepreneurs?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) Yes, Sir.